



YOUTH FROM ANDALUSIAN WESTERN COAST: AN ATTITUDINAL ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT

With the aim of studying the social reality of young people from the Andalusian Western Coast, it has been tried to find the necessities they are from a psycho-social approach. This descriptive study has been carried out periodically since 2000 through three different surveys. In this research we have tried to conduct a study considering the most important social elements linked to youth (sex, education, consumption, or cultural habits). The breadth and diversity of the studied group, the variety of issues affecting them and the large amount of data we have managed on this group, have invited us to include different methodologies in the study. In the present paper, we present our analysis carried out considering quantitative data from a survey which has helped us to recognize and describe the necessities of young people in this Spanish region. The study will be useful to the extent that it will make possible designing further actions, drawing conclusions and making changes in what has been done concerning youth policy.

Keywords: Adolescents, attitudes, tastes, opinions and lifestyles.

INTRODUCTION

Andalusian Western Coast Regional Committee of Youth is composed by the municipalities of Ayamonte, Villablanca, Isla Cristina, Lepe, Cartaya, Gibraleón, Aljaraque and Punta Umbría. This rural study has been developed with the aim of knowing youth main necessities in every municipality which makes up the region. We have had direct access to young people throught activities organized by Andalusian Western Coast Regional Committee along 2010.

Youth is defined here as a lifestyle linked to material conditions dependence. In this context, we will consider some "young people" who are over 30 years old but also "adult people" who are less than 30, this last group in less proportion. Lifestyle characteristics of youth are defined by:



Delay marrying and having children

Stay at familiar home until advanced ages (financial saving produced by this is spent in personal activities)

Lack of stabled employment which would allow to get material goods like an own house.

Precarial job conditions (no contract and temporary)

Long-stay in educational system

More familiar independence

Young people time is morely distributed among education, job, family, household tasks and leisure time

Young activities are majorly based on night life

Youth is relationated with risk behaviours specially along leisure time as drugs consume, unprotected sexual relations, and eating disorders

In lot of cultures and societies, this phenomen is not produced in the same way and at the same time. There are some rites which show the personal transition up to maturity. In this sense, Giddens (1993) defends that teenagers of traditional societies have less to let go of than modern societies one, because their changing pace is slower.

The peculiarity of being teenager in Western societies is linked to child rights expansion and to the formal educational process caused by the rise up to 16 years of the obligatory age of schooling. Teenagers try to be adults but they are treated as children, it could be they want to work but they are obligated to go to school: teenagers are between childhood and maturity, and they grow up in a society subject to change (Giddens, 1993: 116).

For Percival Symonds (1976) most of young people make use of trial and error method during adolescence and adulthood step. It's in this period in which most of insecurities and confusions are produced with regard to important life issues like sexual life or love. Some norms with regard to job, earn money, save money or be educated are transmited, but there are not discussions about sense of life.

On the other hand, Schelsky (1957) shows that socially independent part of youth is not interested any more in hearing ideas and ideals transmited, but in social relations which are able to support personal and private experiences. The most important social institutions for young people are family and peer-group. Family is important to define the place in which the individual is going to be developped. So familiar social class affects to personal socialization models. Another socializing agency is the peer-group. Every generation has certains rights and responsibilities which change as for the age. The importance of peer relations is increasing because children are more time with friends than their parents, who usually are working. So the educational centre is one of the main influences. Piaget (1996) considers more democratical peer relations than child-parents relations. Peer means "equal", so relations based on friendship between boys and girls are egalitarian. Piaget defends that one child in a peer-group discovers a different interactional context, in which he or she can think about it and explore behaviour rules.

These groups have a considerable importance when creating attitudes and behaviours in individuals; at schools, teacher's reactions affect expectations children have from themselves (Giddens, 1993:111).

METHOD

It was decided to use the survey technique in this research. Survey is the most commonly used data collection technique in the educational field (Cohen and Manion, 1990). This popularity is linked to its apparently facility (Hayman, 1984) and the direct character of this method (Walker, 1989).

One survey is "one research carried out on a representative sample of individuals who belong to a broader group, which is developed in a daily life context using standardize procedures of interrogation, with the aim of measuring quantitatively a wide range of objective and subjective character-



istics of the population” (García Ferrando, 1994). We chose applying a self-administer survey because, as Alvira Martín (1984: 219-258) highlights, this is the application modality more appropriate when it’s verified the following premise: “population is naturally grouped and the survey is not so complex to be self-administered”.

Information was collected through one questionnaire designed by the team of experts which is responsible for the project, beginning by research aims and considering population which was directed to. Consecutive versions were designed, and they were analyzed and looked through several times by the group of experts until they decided the definitive one.

It has been carried out a transversal descriptive study based on a population considering one representative sample of young people from the eight of them municipalities which make up Andalusian Western coast (Ayamonte, Villablanca, Isla Cristina, Lepe, Cartaya, Gibralfón, Aljaraque and Punta Umbría). Data collection process was done using a structured questionnaire, filled in paper.

In this study, the survey was composed by 44 questions through 100 subsections structured in 9 information blocks (personal details, education, job, sexuality, consumption, politics, religiosity, attitudes and worries) which construction has depended on a bibliographical review. The questionnaire begins by a little introduction which explains its aims and exhorts young people to honestly participate. Its structure is organized around the nine blocks previously mentioned: first one is made up by sociodemographic variables of sex, age, centre of studies or job; the second block is centered on research levels and assessments around the study; the third one researches about employment and attitudes towards it; the fourth one explores sexual habits; the fifth block deals with some products consumption and young people opinions about this; the sixth and seventh block analyze politics and religiosity among young people of the region; eventually, blocks number eight and nine explore currently topics which are in contact with young people, and their wishes and worries. Every question are closed, some of them are categorized and the most of them in the shape of ordinal scale.

Once designed the definitive version, the questionnaire was passed as a pilot test over 70 young persons who belong to analyzed municipalities. They did not find any remarkable difficulty so this version was not eventually modified.

Population of the study is people who are from 15 to 29 and who come from the municipalities of Ayamonte, Villablanca, Isla Cristina, Lepe, Cartaya, Gibralfón, Aljaraque and Punta Umbría (the official number of young people in 2010 was 26.989). Sampling procedure was stratified, proportional and not random (called “quota sampling” by Cohen and Manion, 1990). With regard to sample size, for one universe size of 26.989 young people considering a confidence level of 95% and a sampling error of $\pm 3\%$, we obtained a sample size composed by 616 young people.

There were introduced the answers into a database. The statistical software utilized for the execution and data exploitation was SPSS v. 18. We have used several statistical approaches when treating the obtained information. At the beginning, it was carried out one descriptive study of frequencies trough the elaboration and exam of frequencies register in every variable. Then it was developed one association among variables study, in which considering firstly one contingency table it was executed some tests of statistical signification (Chi-square, χ^2).

RESULTS

This paper includes the most relevant findings of our study.

3.1. Youth worries

Answers obtained show the fluctuations among what young people do, what they could do, what they have, what they need, whom they live with and how they live. The answers show as well that there are significant differences linked to gender.



One commonly shared worry has to do with professional occupation related to job or studies. Employment and training for joining the professional life are the roots from which youth problems grow up. Job satisfaction is interesting for 21% of those polled. The older the young person is, the more worry with regard to employment is. Professional realization is one of the most important things young people care about.

However lot of them (17%) have declared they are hurt by collective disasters (wars, famines, epidemics,...), enjoy their life is interesting for 12% of young people polled. Leisure time is an important part of young people identity.

Table I. Youth worries

What basic thing would you like to do?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	<i>Enjoy</i>	74	12	12,4	12,4
	<i>To be happy with my job</i>	128	20,8	21,4	33,8
	<i>To make a family</i>	156	25,3	26,1	60
	<i>To be rich</i>	46	7,5	7,7	67,7
	<i>To travel a lot</i>	32	5,2	5,4	73
	<i>To see how wars and miseries disappear</i>	102	16,6	17,1	90,1
	<i>To gain lot of knowledge</i>	18	2,9	3,0	93,1
	<i>To become famous</i>	5	0,8	0,8	94
	<i>To practice my hobbies</i>	15	2,4	2,5	96,5
	<i>Others</i>	17	2,8	2,8	99,3
	<i>no reply</i>	4	0,6	0,7	100
		Total	597	96,9	100
Missing	System	19	3,1		
Total		616	100		

3.2. Politics

Politics interest is very weak, youth of the municipality lacks deep political and ideological assumptions, and they express no interest for having an opinion about politics. The main trait links to it is that 27% of those polled are self-considered “apolitical”, and 25% do not reply. This can be interpreted as most of young people say that they are not able to take a defined position in one scale which symbolizes political affinity from left to right, or they consider that not suitable. Lack of confidence in political institutions and consequently not interest for knowing and supporting political actions could be explained for unreliable promises, lack of real wills, opposite interests or passivity when dealing with youth issues. It could explain as well the strong absenteeism from voting, poor participation of young people in actions supported by public bodies and poor unionization of young students and workers.



By the way, political attitudes are predominantly leftist (14% of the sample) and centrist (11%). However the study does not support one majority ideological position because of young people who do not take a defined ideological position. It's important as well to emphasize the marginal presence of extreme political positions, pointed out by 3% of the sample for extreme left and 1% for extreme right.

Young people generations appear slightly situated on the left in comparison with the position of their parents, even if most of them don't know where to place themselves because they are not identified with left or right wing. This is clearer when people is between 15 and 19. Beyond 19, it's common to find people oriented towards moderated left and moderated right.

Working experience and unemployment is important when defining political positions.

Table II. Politics

Which political position would define you more properly?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valids	Extreme leff	16	2,6	3	3
	Left	74	12	14	17
	Centred-Left	26	4,2	4,9	21,9
	Centre	56	9,1	10,6	32,5
	Centred-Right	33	5,4	6,2	38,7
	Right	23	3,7	4,3	43
	Extreme right	6	1	1,1	44,2
	Apolitical	147	23,9	27,7	71,9
	Others	17	2,8	3,2	75,1
	No reply	132	21,4	24,9	100
	Total	530	86	100	
Missing	System	86	14		
Total		616	100		

CHARACTERISTICALLY ATTITUDES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

This exercise of self-identification invites us to wonder “what do young people think about themselves?”, “which traits are closer than their own identification). Our results say that the picture they have from themselves is defined by consumption, rebelliousness and lack of concern. At the same time, they consider themselves in relatively significant percentages among individualistic, supportive, friendly and responsible people. The less of them think they are cooperative and selfless. Their self-image is something like a contradictory “collage” in which they appear as people who bear consumer goods, and rebel and unworried people. In this plural description they don't appear as mature and worried people, and the positive aspects are more evident than what they intend as mistakes. Almost one out of four declares he or she is materialistic in a consumer society.

With regard to predominant attitudes among young people in general, youth from Andalusian western coast thinks that rebelliousness, consumption and lack of concern are the most important. The most socially desirable characteristics like solidarity, responsibility, vitality or friendship, stay down in a second level.



Table III. Characteristic attitudes of young people from nowadays

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valids	Supportive	94	7,3	7,3
	Responsible	86	6,5	13,8
	Conformist	79	6	19,8
	Rebel	258	19,5	39,3
	Materialist	289	21,8	61,1
	Dynamic	49	3,7	64,8
	Selfless	15	1,1	65,9
	Individualistic	102	7,7	73,6
	Cooperative	9	0,7	74,3
	Unworried	210	15,8	90,1
	Idealist	18	1,4	91,5
	Friendly	86	6,5	98
	Other	15	1,1	99,1
No reply	13	1	100	
Total		575	100	

3.4. Youth worries

We have identified the problems which define the young people ways of life. When asking young people for the most important problems, they are usually related to life conditions. The most frequently mentioned are unemployment, work conditions and drugs.

On the other hand, accommodation problem is strongly considered for young people in the region. The necessity of getting a house in order to build a home or live independently is becoming one dream. The price of the houses has recently increased a lot, hindering for young people the possibility of buying a house. Consequently, familiar emancipation age is delaying.

Speaking about young people from the point of view of their worries means considering the obstacles to get and keep a job, and drug risks. It's so interesting that own young people mention constantly drugs issue, because it has been historically considered one problem linked to marginal collectives. One explanation to that could be that drugs consumption have recently increased a lot among young people. Drugs are perceived as a threat for youth, even if it's not common the direct contact with them (or admitting this contact).

Table IV. Main problems which affect young people

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valids	Unemployment	292	25,1	25,1
	Precarious employment	104	8,9	34
	Accommodation problem	230	19,8	53,8
	Education-employ gap	60	5,2	59
	Lack of communication at home	74	6,4	65,4
	Money	90	7,7	73,1
	drugs	88	7,6	80,7
	Other	215	18,5	99,2
	No reply	7	0,6	100
Total		579	100	



DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The main aim of this regional study has been to know the sociocultural reality among young people from each municipality which take part of Andalusian western coast. It's important to underline that we have worked in direct contact with young people while developing the study (through meeting with different associations and collectives, and visiting educational centers) along 2010. We think we have been able to detect the most important necessities in young people from this direct contact and the descriptive study introduced by this paper.

We have described the reality through social elements like education, employment, emancipation, familiar situation, familiar relations, consumption, politics, religion, attitudes and worries. We have detected a strong gap between people who is still completing their scholar period and people who is in process of incorporation to work life. This is a well defined moment, which coincides with the critical step between adolescence and adulthood. The minority of them will continue their studies getting the university and moving out towards the town (Huelva); however, combining job and studies is an important factor. Of course, in order to explain this changing process, it is necessary to study in depth this reality using a sort of qualitative date in further researches.

Finally, it's necessary to mention that young people don't trust in participation mechanism, above all when this participation is promoted by public institutions. We have detected some interests for pretending they want to participate, supported by a clear lack of confidence and interest from public institutions.

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